

GREENSBORO PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING

Wednesday, April 8, 2009–5:30pm

Simkins Pavilion (Barber Park)–1500 Dan's Road

PRESENT MEMBERS: Rose Marie Ponton, Chair, Carl Brower, Jr, Vice-Chair, Paul Brown, Marc Bush (arrived 5:39), Lori Galbreath, Bill Knight, Steve Moore (arrived 5:35)

ABSENT MEMBERS: Ken Free

OTHERS PRESENT: Steve Branson, Candice Bruton, Russ Clegg (Community and Housing Development), Sue Davis, John Hughes, Tony Kozuch (Engineering and Inspections), Dan Maxson, Lane Newsome, Darious Oliver, Eddie Pugh, Marcie Richardson, Mike Simpson, Angie Stacey, Allison Staton, Laurie Thore, Don Tilley, Dr. Anthony Wade, Chris Wilson

The regular meeting of the Greensboro Parks and Recreation Commission was held at the Simkins Pavilion in Barber Park. Rose Marie Ponton, Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:30pm. Ponton introduced the new Parks and Recreation Interim Director, Dr. Anthony Wade. Dr. Wade is also the Director of the Human Relations Department. Ponton welcomed the citizens in attendance.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the March 11, 2009 Commission Meeting were approved as submitted.

Recognition

Dr. Anthony Wade, Interim Director, recognized the Parks and Recreation April Employee of the Month, Sue Davis.

Mike Simpson, Watershed Parks and Trails Superintendent, recognized Austin Zimmerman, Eagle Scout, for the Eagle Scout project he completed of installing rescue markers along Owl's Roost Trail. The rescue markers will assist in a faster response time in case of an accident. Volunteers will be installing rescue markers on other trails.

NEW BUSINESS

Neighborhood Small Projects Program

Russ Clegg, Community and Housing Development (HCD), stated that the Neighborhood Small Projects Program allows neighborhoods to apply for projects on public property in their neighborhood. This program is part of the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) budget and provides \$100,000 annually to be used towards approved projects. The requested project must be a physical capital improvement and must be on city property. This is a multi-department program administered by HCD. Eight departments review the applications as well as two residents not employed by the City of Greensboro. Applications are distributed after the annual budget approval although applications are available throughout the year. Selected applications are presented to the Parks and Recreation Commission then to the Planning Board and then to City Council for adoption.

Clegg reported that last years projects included installation of a bridge crossing a creek in Ardmore Park. Due to storm water regulations this project become more difficult and more of an expense than originally expected. This project is currently in bid the process. Once the bid process is complete, funds for the other two projects can be released. These two projects include street signs in the Aycock neighborhood and improvements to Sternberger Park.

Clegg stated that six applications were received this year, two are being recommended for funding. The first project is entrance improvements and walking trails at Heath Park. The second project is in Steelman Park located in the Glenwood neighborhood and includes installation of flashcams, stream bank re-vegetation, improved lighting along the trail that runs across the park, and shade structures. Requests not recommended for funding include street sign repairs around Fisher Park and a basketball court at Jonesboro Scott Park.

Clegg continued stating that Warnersville Recreation Center was approved in 2007-08 to have the parking lot expanded. Soil samplings found that the soil is mostly fill dirt and unstable therefore more funds are needed than originally expected. This request was applied for again and denied due to the amount of funding needed.

Candice Bruton, Planning and Project Development Manager, added that the department will be able to move forward to complete this project using internal sources.

Clegg stated that the Westerwood Neighborhood Association wanted to build a community garden and was not recommended for funding due to the area selected often floods.

Knight inquired if federal stimulus funds would have any impact for this program.

Clegg replied stating federal stimulus funds would not have any impact on this program.

Brower requested more information regarding how the applications are selected.

Clegg replied stating that there are 5 basic criteria. Each person on the selection team scores the criteria independently and then the scores are totaled. The following is the criteria used for how each application is selected.

- Community Benefit
- Volunteer and Community Support/Participation
- Availability of Community Resources
- Impact on City Resources (long-term impact– not initial impact)
- Community Partners

Brown inquired if remaining funds from the \$100,000 would be carried over to the following year.

Clegg responded no, remaining funds return to the general CIP budget.

Action Taken

A motion was made by Paul Brown and seconded for the Planning Board to recommend approval of the Heath Park and Steelman Park projects to City Council. A vote in favor was unanimous.

Ponton introduced and welcomed Steve Moore, newly appointed Commission Member.

OLD BUSINESS

Barber Park

Eddie Pugh, Barber Park Manager, reported that Barber Park, originally known as Southeast Park, opened in 1989. The Park was dedicated to Jimmy I. Barber, a long-standing Greensboro City Council Member from 1969-1981. The Simkins Indoor Sports Pavilion was formally an air support structure with 8 tennis and 4 volleyball courts. In late 2002 the roof on the tennis side of the air support structure collapsed during an ice storm. The Simkins Pavilion was named in 1998 in honor of Dr. George C. Simkins, Jr., avid tennis player. The Pavilion consists of tennis, volleyball, basketball and badminton courts. Also in 1998 the disc golf course opened. A local disc golf organization raised funds to purchase the goals, and assisted with installing the goals. The Penn Wright ball field baseball stadium opened in 1991, home of the eastern league bronco team. Barber Park offers a 1.3 mile walking trail. Pugh then turned the meeting over to Lane Newsome, Greensboro Sportsplex and Simkins Pavilion Manager.

Newsome informed the Commission that the Pavilion serves as a practice facility for a number of travel youth teams. Rodney Westmoreland offers a basketball skills clinic 2 nights a week and 1 day on the weekend. The Pavilion hosts the Parks & Recreation adult basketball league program during the winter 4 nights a week and an adult dodge ball league. A midnight basketball program will begin every Friday night from 8:00pm-Midnight, free and open to the public. This is a joint effort between the Police Athletic League, The Hope Project and the Simkins Pavilion. A

number of special events are held at the Pavilion, such as Junior and Adult Olympic Volleyball Tournaments through the Carolina Region of the US Association of Volleyball, Triple S Volleyball, Salvation Army Tournaments, baby and bridal showers, birthday parties, community meetings, etc. The tennis courts are booked all day every day during the winter season and are scheduled through the tennis facilitator. A summer sports camp is held at the Pavilion where kids are exposed to traditional (football, basketball, volleyball, etc.) and non-traditional (fencing, field hockey, etc.) sports. An open play period is from 4:00pm-5:30pm Monday-Thursday and Sundays from 3:00pm-6:00pm.

A citizen expressed concern that citizens are limited to times that the Pavilion is available for public use.

Newsome replied stating that if there are courts available outside of the scheduled times the facility is open to the public that anyone can use the courts; however most nights and weekends all courts are booked with tournaments, team practices and league play.

Another citizen expressed concern that scheduled activities at the Pavilion are not publicized and it seems as though others outside the community are able to utilize the facility more than the surrounding community. This citizen inquired how programming information regarding the facility can be distributed so the surrounding community is informed.

Newsome stated that operating hours are posted on the door at the Pavilion entrance and funding is currently not available to run ads. Mailings have been sent in the past to the area zip code. Newsome stated that a new website has recently been established (simkinspavilion.com) where residents can view and be kept up to date with the Pavilion.

Lori Galbreath, Commission Member, stated that the Leisure Guide is a resource for the Simkins Pavilion schedule of events. The Leisure Guide is distributed to subscribers of the News & Record and is available at all city facilities such as the Pavilion, recreation centers, libraries, etc.

Carl Brower, Jr, Commission Vice-Chair, stated that the Simkins Pavilion is a regional facility unlike recreation centers which are mainly utilized by near-by neighborhoods. Brower stated that anyone interested in using any of the facilities listed in the Leisure Guide have the opportunity to call and make reservations if space is available. Citizens have to schedule to use recreation centers just as the Simkins Pavilion.

A citizen expressed concern that the surrounding community feels that the Simkins Pavilion is as though a recreation center and they should have easy accessibility just as if it is a recreation center.

Newsome stated that anytime a court is open it will be available for use.

Pugh added that in addition to the indoor Simkins Pavilion, Barber Park offers an outdoor basketball slab that will have new goals and backboards in the coming week that is open to the public.

Ponton thanked everyone for expressing their concerns and the information will be used to better support and inform the area residents of their requests. Staff will discuss these concerns and perhaps return with a marketing plan for the surrounding community.

Brower encouraged citizens to always bring concerns, questions, etc. to the Commission or to staff so that they may be addressed.

Candice Bruton, Planning and Project Development Manager, stated that grading and construction has resumed at Barber Park. This construction includes 6 shelter replacements with electricity. The parking lot will be strategically placed for easy access to the shelters. Two playground units over a 6,000 square feet area will be installed which is greater than any other playground structure and area in Greensboro. One unit is designed for 7 years and older the other designed for 6 years and younger. For safety purposes, the playground area will have a rubberized surface which is not used in any other Parks & Recreation playgrounds. A sprayground will be installed and will be divided into age appropriate sides. Restrooms will be built and will have an entrance from the sprayground and an entrance

from the playground. There will be a concession and ticket stand to accept a nominal admission fee that has not yet been established.

Citizens expressed concern of an admission fee for the sprayground.

Maxson stated that the Parks & Recreation Commission approves Parks and Recreation fees.

Bruton continued stating that most of the grading on the site is complete, the restroom building is currently being constructed, and electrical work and plumbing has begun. Construction of the concession building will begin near the end of April. Project completion is projected for the beginning of September 2009.

A future component to Barber Park is a community building. Bruton stated that in 2008 voters passed a Parks and Recreation bond referendum that included a 3 million dollar allocation for Barber Park. These funds will provide a future phase to consist of a community building to accommodate meeting space, family reunions, a catering kitchen, etc. Most of the design work is complete. It is not designed to include a gymnasium. There will need to be a bond sell in order to move forward with construction. Mayor Johnson has stated during previous council meetings that during this difficult economic time the city does not support selling bonds that would increase taxes. As a result it looks like the next bond sell will be in 2010. When these funds become available Parks and Recreation will return to the community for input before moving forward.

A citizen inquired if there will be shade at the newly constructed shelters.

Bruton replied stating that there is a detailed landscape plan that includes trees, shrubs, flowers, etc. Initially there would be less shade until maturity of landscaping items. There is a large shade structure that is planned to be located in the sprayground area.

Brower added that the new shelters will have a longer overhang allowing for more shade unlike the previous shelters. Brower encouraged citizens to stay close to council members so that when the next bond sale occurs Barber Park is included.

Steve Moore inquired if the sprayground would require lifeguards.

Bruton replied stating that the sprayground will be a staffed facility to include a certified pool operator, but lifeguards would not be necessary since there will be not be standing water.

A citizen inquired if the Gateway Garden will also include a sprayground.

Wilson replied stating that the Gateway Gardens will have misters, not a sprayground.

A citizen requested that residents be notified when rules and regulations for the sprayground are established.

SPEAKERS FROM THE FLOOR

Don Tilley, Assistant Athletics Director, stated that the Parks and Recreation Athletic Division was approached by Southeastern Chevrolet Dealerships to perhaps participate in their youth baseball raffle program. The raffle consists of selling tickets for 2 new 2009 Chevrolet vehicles. One hundred percent of the revenue generated from Greensboro Parks and Recreation for selling the raffle tickets will be given to Greensboro Parks and Recreation. The program kick off was held 3 weeks ago with Bill Black, Terry Labonte and others from Southeast Chevrolet Dealers. During this kickoff Parks and Recreation was given \$500 from Bill Black Cadillac and \$500 from Terry Labonte Chevrolet. They also gave each coach dry erase boards for lineups to place in dugouts and 40 equipment bags. Raffle tickets will be sold from April 24 through the end of May. Four to five thousand dollars in revenue is projected. The top selling team will receive 10% of the revenue in equipment vouchers and second place will receive 5%. Youth baseball

participants are invited to attend a baseball clinic hosted by the Greensboro Grasshoppers at NewBridge Bank Park on June 26 & 27.

John Hughes, Youth and Community Services Manager, informed the Commission that on May 9, 2009 a dedication at Pomona Baseball Field will be held. This field was converted to an all-accessible field through an Eagle Scout Project completed by Brandt Taylor. Hughes stated that it has been requested that a plaque listing all those involved and supportive of the field be placed on the concession building.

Action Taken

A motion was made by Paul Brown and seconded to approve the placement of the plaque at Pomona Baseball Field. A vote in favor was unanimous.

Tijuanita B. Hayes, 6 Pyruess Ct, stated that Barber Park was a selling point for her 22 years ago when she moved to a near-by neighborhood. Hayes stated that Eddie Pugh does an excellent job working with the community. Hayes expressed concern and asked the City of Greensboro and Parks and Recreation be considerate of knowing that the children in the area should be able to walk to Barber Park to utilize its amenities and not have to walk to Windsor Recreation Center. Ms. Hayes supports the sprayground but asked the Commission to be considerate of the entry fee.

Steve Branson, Regional Parks Superintendent informed the Commission that a needs assessment survey for Hagan-Stone Park has been posted on the Parks and Recreation website.

INTERIM DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS

Dr. Wade thanked the Commission for volunteering their time and for their service to serve the citizens of Greensboro. Dr. Wade thanked Eddie Pugh and Lane Newsome for their hospitality. Dr. Wade thanked his staff for their efforts and encouraged those who have questions to feel free to bring them to staff. Dr. Wade most importantly thanked the citizens and residents of the surrounding community. He stated that the way city government is improved is through citizen input and knowledge about the issues that face the community. Dr. Wade stated that he looks forward to serving the citizens as the Interim Director of Parks & Recreation.

COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS

Rose Marie Ponton informed everyone that the next Parks and Recreation Commission meeting will be held as a tour of Parks and Recreation facilities on May 13, 2009 at 3:00pm. Ponton then turned the presentation over to Bruton.

Bruton informed the Commission that the tour of facilities will consist of a visit to Keeley Park, Heath Park, Downtown Greenway, Ole Asheboro Park, Lake Daniel Park, and Sportsplex. Business items will be heard at the Sportsplex along with dinner.

Ponton invited the Commission to attend the Citizen Board Member Forum and informed Members that information on the Forum has been placed in their packets. Ponton also informed Members that Lobby Day will be May 29, 2009. Parks and recreation advocates may attend to show state representatives their support of land conservation funds and other items that relate to parks and recreation.

Ponton welcomed Steve Moore once more as a new Member of the Greensboro Parks and Recreation Commission.

Paul Brown informed Members that he met with the Playful City Committee and the application is in process. Brown stated that the meeting this evening was a good example of the Commission being informed of what is happening in the surrounding community and shows it is a benefit to citizens of conducting Commission meetings at various locations throughout the city.

Lori Galbreath stated that she was approached by a parent whose child has to volunteer 60 hours of service during the month of June and requested information on where this family can be directed in order to volunteer at a Parks and Recreation facility and/or Library.

Wilson informed Galbreath that she may contact the Wildlife Center at Bur-Mil Park and may contact Sandy Neerman in regards to library volunteer opportunities.

Bill Knight stated that the concerns brought forth this evening are what the Commission needs to hear. Knight informed Members that he attended one of the budget meetings conducted by the city. During the meeting ideas were solicited from the public regarding the city's budget and how the city could meet the 7.5 million dollar shortfall.

Carl Brower, Jr. informed Members that he also attended one of the public city budget meetings held in district 2. Parks and Recreation was high on the list of items that the public wants to see maintained.

Marc Bush stated that he echoes fellow Members and commends the surrounding community for bringing their concerns before the Commission. Commission meetings were held in Council Chambers for quite some time and one of the wisest decisions made were to conduct Commission meetings at various city facilities providing easier access to citizens residing near the meeting location.

Steve Moore stated that he did not attend a city budget public meeting; however did forward comments to his district council member. Moore stated that he is a previous member of the Community Resource Board. Moore stated that he utilizes Parks and Recreation facilities frequently by playing tennis, golf, and shopping at the Farmer's Curb Market. Moore suggested working with staff to find ways to better communicate with the area neighborhoods and bring forward recommendations by July or August. Moore stated that he participated in the Citizen's Academy hosted by the City of Greensboro and it is the reason he became involved in volunteerism with the City and encouraged others to participate in the program.

Dr. Wade stated that discussions regarding communications with the surrounding community have taken place with the Interim City Manager, Bob Morgan and will continue to do so. Staff will return to the Commission with items for consideration.

With no further business Ponton adjourned the meeting at 7:33pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Marcie Richardson, Executive Assistant
Greensboro Parks and Recreation